

# Higher Education Coordination & Infrastructure

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## Mission

To collectively provide higher education services that meet citizens' needs, are flexible in response to changing needs, and do not duplicate services except where appropriate.

## Summary of Activities

Indiana's system of public higher education is planned and coordinated by the **Commission for Higher Education** (CHE). It does this in cooperation with the **Commission on Proprietary Education** (COPE), the **Indiana Higher Education Telecommunications System** (IHETS), and the Independent Colleges of Indiana.

The chief responsibilities of the CHE are to define institutional missions; approve new campuses or extension centers; approve new degree programs; review established degree programs; and review both operating and capital budget requests from the institutions and from the **State Student Assistance Commission**. The review of budget requests culminates in recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly regarding public funding for Indiana higher education.



INDIANA COMMISSION  
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COPE is charged with regulating privately owned, postsecondary career schools. It seeks to maintain and improve career schools' quality and vocational effectiveness. It is responsible for guarding against any fraudulent activity on the part of career school operators.

IHETS was created by the General Assembly in 1967 to facilitate the distribution of educational resources via communications technologies. IHETS maintains voice, video, and data networks and coordinates campus- and community-based learning centers that permit the delivery of courses across the state. Its members are Indiana's colleges and universities. Partners include K-12 schools, public libraries, state government, and public broadcasting. IHETS and its distance education component, the Indiana College Network, are managed jointly by the higher education institutions.

The state and the institutions are also members of the Midwestern Higher Education Commission (MHEC). This is a consortium of nine states that seeks to assist higher education in member states through joint procurement policies, the evaluation of courseware products, and the like.

## External Factors

Constantly changing demands for postsecondary access and for specific degree programs require a coordinated statewide response. For example, economic development concerns and the need for flexible, low-cost, non-traditional educational services led to the introduction of the Community College of Indiana. The rapid spread and advancement of instructional technology challenge IHETS and the public institutions to maintain Indiana's world-class reputation. Affording essential technology improvements will be an issue throughout the foreseeable future.

## Evaluation and Accomplishments

An ongoing success has been the continuing collaboration among the institutions in providing technology linkages. In addition to providing phone and data service for all Indiana campuses, IHETS provides multiple technologies for delivering access and student support through a network of 60 campus- and community-based learning centers. The technologies most used for this purpose are the Internet and a four-channel satellite television network; IHETS installs and maintains the equipment needed for both. IHETS also provides technology access and student support. The programmatic side of IHETS is overseen by the voluntary association known as the Indiana Partnership for Statewide Education (IPSE).

Another accomplishment has been the completion of a collaborative effort to close degree programs that produce few or no graduates. In 1999 CHE staff undertook a degree-production analysis of all degree programs offered by the public institutions. This produced a finding that 453 programs did not meet the threshold for adequate degree production. In December 1999, the Commission accepted a report on actions taken by six of the institutions. Together they have eliminated 135 of the 282 programs that had been identified at these institutions as having few graduates. Subsequently the seventh institution reported eliminating 23 of 171 programs with few graduates.



## Plans for the Biennium

IHETS will use the Access Indiana State Network (AISN) to upgrade the distance education delivery system known as Indiana College Network (ICN). The intent is to provide a learner-centered portal, the *Digital Learning Space*, where IHETS member institutions can compete more effectively to improve learning opportunities for Indiana residents. This will include adding more medium capacity (T1) links to AISN and installing redundant equipment and circuits to make the network more reliable. IHETS will also improve and update ICN Web services with the specific intention of improved student service and satisfaction.

The CHE expects to continue the review of programs with few graduates, and to urge the institutions to close programs that show little or no degree production. Indiana's Articulation and Transfer initiative, facilitated by the Commission for Higher Education, is expected to significantly improve transfer and articulation options for students at all of the state's public postsecondary institutions. This is essential for the effective operation of Community College of Indiana, which must assure students of articulation opportunities with four-year programs, but it is pertinent also to course transfer options within multi-campus university systems. Enhancing transfer and articulation options has long been a CHE goal. It was given impetus by a December 1997 study, which found that 18 percent of beginning freshmen from Fall 1990 had transferred to another institution within six years.

